

AM on HF - when someone asks QTF?

Gentle intro makes friends fast!

by Paul Courson WA3VJB, 24 May 2023

Sometimes when I write about our part of the hobby, I have learned to tailor the tone to the audience. Years ago, a strident tone overcame unfounded criticism about "being on AM," including confrontations on the air. These days, I find people open-minded and receptive to considering why we find AM on HF enjoyable.

I just posted this to the Zed, in a forum on audio & microphones. It came out well, in my view, and I post it here in case you find any of it useful when you engage with people and they wonder from curiosity.

.AF5LS said: ↑

Something I've wondered about...AMers are interested in excellent audio on the low bands // there seems to be a shortage of AMers in my catchment area so to speak. // where lovely audio is possible and won't bother anyone!

I had to laugh at your last line here, because more people presently on HF in the hobby seem "bothered" by maladjusted and poor quality audio. And that's among all voice modes on HF!

Brief history follows.

The credit for an awareness of and desire for improved audio has primarily been attributed to **Julius, W2IHY**, who I met at the Dayton hamfest years ago, back when his leadership in product development led to units that made "stock" transceiver audio on HF easier to listen to.

Manufacturers took note. The category of "audio" suddenly became part of the menu settings of newer, more functional HF rigs, initially by Yaesu and Kenwood, and eventually by Icom.

A preference to avoid "space shuttle audio" really took off about 25 years ago with the advent of SDR transceivers such as the Flex 1000, and later, the Anan.

By this time, people had also discovered they could adapt improved microphones popular among musicians, broadcasters, and podcasters to further get away from the pinched and narrow sound typical of years past.

It's been years that good audio became fashionable, and those of us on AM welcomed others from SSB who enjoyed the easy listening and wished to join us.

Fortunately for my part of the hobby, AM on HF, the continuum of audio "quality" can vary more than you may think. I would say most stations I encounter have NOT fully explored available fidelity and do not plan to.

Part of the reason, in my opinion, is that a stock AM transmitter from the vacuum tube era already satisfies them. The information in the carrier is comforting and pleasant, consisting of cues to a listener that someone is collecting their thoughts and responding to points being discussed; a sort of pace & punctuation marker not available on incomplete modes found on HF.

Based on the lookup page as to where you're at, I believe there is substantial AM activity in your coverage area. A bit more research will find it, including the use of internet-based SDR receivers that could overcome possible shortcomings in reception at home.

AM is a premium mode. It takes greater care to hear & be heard, but the payoff is commensurate.

Hope to work you some day. You would be welcome.

forums.qrz.com

Very kind of you. I won't give up.

AF5LS, Today at 8:23 AM